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## Development Moves Forward

March 18, 2008

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### Council Votes pDEIS Complete

Yonkers City Council President Chuck Lesnick, upon the request of the Real Estate Committee, held a special meeting last night to vote on accepting the modified February, 2008 Struever, Fidelco, Cappelli (SFC) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) as complete and adequate for public review for River Park Center, Cacace Center, Palisades Point, and Larkin Plaza.

The vote passed unanimously, 7 to 0.

"This is a small step for the City Council and a giant step forward in creating a renaissance of Yonkers' downtown and waterfront areas," said Lesnick.

Real Estate Committee Co-chair Patricia McDow concurred.

"This will bring the discussion on the merits of the project to the community," she said. "I am looking forward to letting the dialogue begin."

The SFC project is the largest proposed redevelopment effort in Yonkers' history and includes River Park Center, a shopping and parking complex topped by a minor league baseball stadium and two 50-story apartment towers, plus two 25-story residential waterfront buildings.

The City Council is the lead agency for the environmental review process which is meant to maximize public awareness of the proposed development's impact and to ensure public input.

The review, mandated by the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), is close to 4,000 pages long and addresses everything from land use, zoning and public policy and traffic/transportation to noise and air quality assessments, construction impacts (including environmental remediation), and more.

To help the City and the Council through the process, the City has retained a well-respected team of experts headed by the planning firm, AKRF.

Mayor Phil Amicone said, "When it's complete the SFC project will be the most significant development in our history and, from the beginning, we have demonstrated how government and the private sector can partner together to do something truly monumental for the City of Yonkers. I want to commend members of the City Council, especially Council President Lesnick, for their hard work and determination in moving this project forward. I look forward to a complete, but timely public review period in hopes of getting shovels in the ground this year."

SFC project Executive Joe Apicella added, "This is an important first step in the environmental review process and we applaud the City Council and its legal/planning consultants on a job well done. It is our hope that the detailed review process will now cause the balance of the approval process to be expeditious. The public has been waiting for the public hearings and we believe that our outreach to the community all these months will now pay dividends."

While it has taken some time to review a project of this scale, the Council and its consultants have consistently pushed to conduct a thorough and timely review so that the public could be brought into the process at the earliest possible time.

SFC's first draft was delivered to the Council in July 2007. The Council's independent consultants, AKRF, helped guide the Council through the process and together submitted more than 40 pages of comments back to SFC in October 2007 to which the City Council responded in February 2008.

The City Council accepted the DEIS tonight. A notice of completion and a notice of a public hearing will be published when the developer submits the DEIS and the Council's consultant, AKRF, confirms that the document conforms with the resolution passed last night.

#### City Council Declares Yonkers Green Week, April 21-27



The City Council unanimously passed a resolution last week to officially recognize the week of Earth Day and Arbor Day as "Green Week" in Yonkers, April 20- 27.

With Yonkers Public Schools on spring break and Passover at the same time, our "green team" has respectfully juggled the activity schedule to hopefully accommodate everyone.

Most of the events are taking place from Sunday, April 20 - Sunday, April 27 anyway, making the timing great for parents looking to entertain their children during the break.

There will be something for everyone from a free environmental film series and hands-on

learning activities on the waterfront to community garden clean-ups, and more. The [Westchester Veggie Van](#), Westchester's educational van that runs on used vegetable oil, will also be making an appearance.

Want to get involved? The Council's [Green Policy Task Force](#) is calling for community-based organizations, schools, government and non-governmental agencies, and others to host events and activities designed to educate our community about preserving and sustaining the natural environment that exists in Yonkers through thoughtful stewardship of our resources.

The calendar of submitted events and activities is filling up more every day! We encourage everyone to participate! So please submit your plans and/or contact Green Policy Task Force coordinator Samantha Wapnick for ideas at [samantha.wapnick@yonkersNY.gov](mailto:samantha.wapnick@yonkersNY.gov) or by calling her at 914-377-6060. The deadline for submittal is March 26, 2008.

#### Albany Bound



Council Member John Murtagh and I spent last Wednesday in Albany lobbying for education funding as part of the annual budget process with Assemblyman Mike Spano, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Assemblyman Gary Pretlow (pictured here.)

The lobbying is particularly difficult this year since the

national recession is impacting the housing market which in turn adversely affects property, transfer and sales taxes.

#### Governor Paterson on Yonkers School Funding

I returned to Albany on Monday for the swearing in of Governor David Paterson. While many acknowledge the budget challenge facing him, he seems to have many supporters who want nothing more than for him than to be successful, healthy and happy in his new position.

I have worked with David Paterson for more than 20 years and am convinced he will do everything within his power to maintain funding for programs critical to education and to cities.



Here, we spoke briefly after the ceremony about Yonkers' lobbying efforts thus far.

He listened and said, "that's why we have to get to work now."

Governor Paterson is well-aware of the progress that Yonkers is making and the needs that it still has due to the advocacy of our state legislators and the frequent visits to Albany that the Mayor and I have made.

Hopefully he can navigate through the state's tough fiscal situation.

**Save the Date: Thursday, March 20 from 9 a.m. -12:30 p.m.**



A program entitled, "Yonkers: Gateway to the Hudson Valley: an Environmental and Economic Symposium" will address regional implications of Yonkers waterfront development for municipal and conservation leaders at the [Beczak Center](#), 35 Alexander St., downtown Yonkers. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Keynote speaker: Harris Steinberg, University of Pennsylvania, Ex. Dir. PennPraxis of Penn Design, and Ex. Planner, Civic Vision for the Central Delaware Riverfront in Philadelphia. Panelists from Scenic Hudson, NRDC, NYS Dept of State; and Regional Director of NYS DEC Region 3, Willie Janeway. Sponsors: Yonkers Committee for

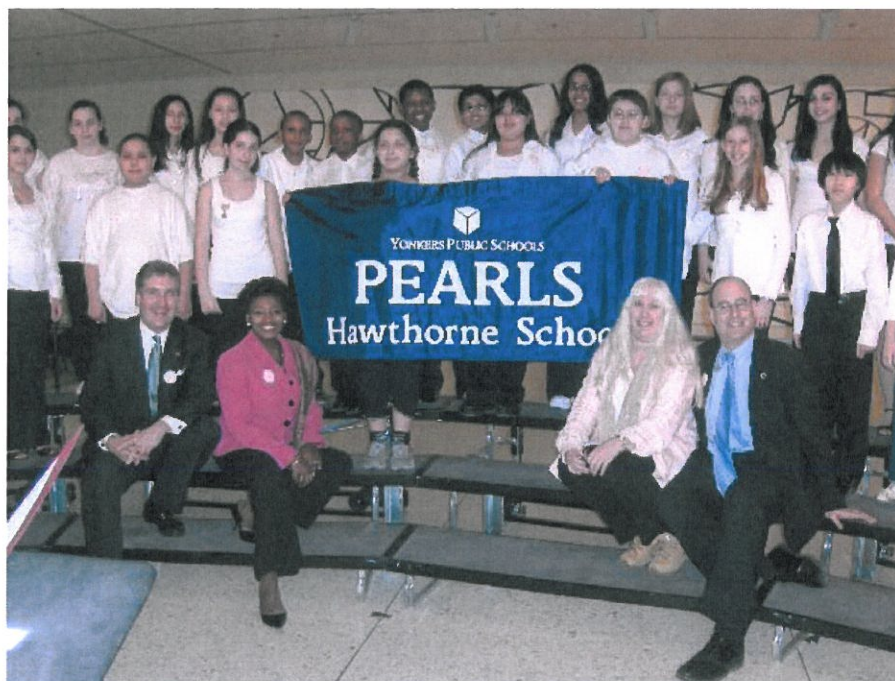
Smart Development, Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, Inc., and Scenic Hudson.

Please RSVP by calling 914-422-4053 or by emailing [info@fcwc.org](mailto:info@fcwc.org)

### PEARLS in Albany

While lobbying for education funding in Albany last week, choir students from PEARLS, a Yonkers Public School for the gifted and talented, sang at the Empire State Plaza.

The PEARLS A Cappella Choir, conducted by Emme Kresek, performed the program that earned them the New York State School Music



Association (NYSSMA) rating of "Gold with Distinction-Level III" along with other pieces from their multi-national repertoire.

The choir sang in seven languages and were accompanied by concert pianist/PEARLS parent, Renee Harris.

It was all part of the NYSSMA 35th annual celebration of "Music in Our Schools Month." This year, 85 bands, orchestras and choruses totaling 3,000 students have been selected to perform.

### PEARLS Makes History



Thanks to Assemblyman Mike Spano, PEARLS made history by being the first ever to receive a special invitation to sing before the New York State Assembly.

For the Assembly members holding their first legislative session after the unprecedented announcement by the outgoing Governor, the musical interlude was calming and appreciated. Moreover, it reinforced the importance of music and arts in our schools and in our lives.

### Hot Ticket

## YOUTH THEATRE INTERACTIONS

performing arts center which has been training Westchester children in dance, music, drama and photography for more than 36 years.

Broadway cast members who will perform include James Harkness (The Color Purple); Susie Bigelow (Oklahoma, Footloose); Jimmy Tate (The Tap Dance Kid, Bring in the Noise); Stanley Wayne Mathis (Wonderful Town, Kiss Me, Kate); Michael-Demby Cain (Ragtime, Beauty and the Beast); Mamie Duncan- Gibbs (Cats, Chicago).

Tickets are \$50 for seniors 65 or older; \$75 all others. Prices include the show and after party (drinks and light fare) at Zuppa Restaurant on Main St.

While this is a well-attended event, sometimes annual ticket holders can not make the performance and their seats go empty. If anyone wishes to fill one of those seats but can not afford the ticket, please let me know and I will see what I can do.

For more information, contact Youth Theatre Interactions. Inc., PO Box 1187, Yonkers, NY 10702- 1187. Phone: (914) 963-3040. E-mail: ytiyonkers@aol.com

### Musicals and Concerts



Saunders High School will be presenting Disney's High School Musical on stage, directed by Zaina Hasso, on Friday, April 11 at 7 p.m. The show is free.

The Yonkers All City Choir and band Concert will be performing at Lincoln High School on March 28 from 7 to 9 p.m. The show is free.

email: [chuck.lesnick@yonkersny.gov](mailto:chuck.lesnick@yonkersny.gov)

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